

VZCZCXRO5275
PP RUEHDBU
DE RUEHEK #0228/01 0641204
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 051204Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9052
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1975
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 0080
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0092
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 0557
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0380
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 0089
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0247
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC PRIORITY
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 2385
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1769
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE PRIORITY
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000228

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/05/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ UNITED FRONT MOVES FORWARD

REF: BISHKEK 196

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Classified By: Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Former Prime Minister Felix Kulov said during a March 5 press conference that the opposition United Front that he founded following his ouster from office would campaign throughout the country to push for early presidential elections. Kulov argued that people had voted in 2005 for the Bakiyev-Kulov "tandem," and now that the tandem had been broken, it was necessary to "legitimize" the previous election. He did not rule out holding public demonstrations, but emphasized that the group's actions would be constitutional and peaceful. Kulov denied that United Front intended to disrupt this summer's Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Bishkek, saying the opposition's campaign and SCO were not connected. Contrary to expectations, Kulov did not use the occasion to make further charges against President Bakiyev or other former colleagues in government. Without providing any details of United Front's planned actions, the Chairman of Kulov's Ar Namys party, Emil Aliyev, told Poloff that "everything would be resolved within a month," seeming to imply that pre-term elections would take place soon. END SUMMARY.

UNITED FRONT PREPS FOR CAMPAIGNS

12. (U) During a March 5 press conference, former Prime Minister Felix Kulov said that his opposition group -- United Front -- is preparing for public information campaigns throughout the country to call for pre-term presidential elections. (Note: President Bakiyev's term runs until 2010. End Note.) Kulov claimed United Front was not pushing for Bakiyev to resign. Rather, he said, people in 2005 had voted for the Bakiyev-Kulov "tandem," and now that Bakiyev had broken the tandem, it was necessary to "legitimize" the last

election. A new election would decide Bakiyev's fate. Kulov did not say that he would run against Bakiyev, but he did caveat his response by adding that the "people would decide who should be nominated."

13. (U) Without detailing the actions the opposition would undertake in its campaign, Kulov said United Front was "not opposed" to public demonstrations. Kulov stressed that United Front's actions would be legitimate, constitutional, and peaceful, assuring the press that there would be no looting if demonstrations are held. Kulov also said that United Front is not planning to disrupt this summer's SCO summit, calling claims to the contrary a provocation. He said that the SCO summit and the opposition's demands were unrelated matters.

14. (U) Kulov cautioned that if the authorities decide to confront the opposition in a forceful manner, United Front would seek the assistance of the CSTO, OSCE, and other international organizations. When asked where United Front was getting its funding, Kulov said that "many" businessmen had shown support because they had "suffered a lot" under the current Bakiyev administration. Kulov denied that he was receiving any support from Russia, but noted that he had had a "warm" meeting with Russian Vice PM Sergei Ivanov while in Moscow the week of February 26. He also dismissed rumors that he had met with former Kyrgyz President Akayev -- or that he has any relations with Akayev's family.

15. (C) Following the press conference, the Chairman of Kulov's Ar Namys party, Emil Aliyev, told Poloff that United Front, together with Ar Namys, seeks only to improve the lives of all Kyrgyz citizens. By enabling free speech, allowing criticism of the government, and initiating necessary political and economic reforms, Aliyev said that

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Kyrgyzstan's future would be brightened. Although the party chair did not describe exactly how the opposition would ensure those goals are met, or speculate how the government would react to their demands, Aliyev did promise that "everything would be resolved within a month," seeming to imply that early elections would take place soon.

COMMENT: UNITED FRONT CAUTIOUSLY MOVES AHEAD

16. (C) Kulov was calm, collected, and terse throughout the one hour press conference. Contrary to expectations, and unlike his February 28 interview with newspaper Delo Nomer, the former PM did not discuss details surrounding his ouster, nor did he dish dirt on his former colleagues in government. Rather, Kulov focused on the opposition's demand for pre-term presidential elections, though did not provide any details of the planned "campaign." We see little prospects that Bakiyev will step down to allow early presidential elections as a result of opposition pressure, leaving unclear how effective United Front's strategy will be. While Kulov was vague when answering questions about United Front's financial backing, it is clear that United Front does have funding, as it has opened new offices in Bishkek and several other cities around the country.

YOVANOVITCH